Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

5311th meeting

Wednesday, 30 November 2005, 10.10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Denisov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. D'Alotto
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Tarrisse da Fontoura
	China	Mr. Li Junhua
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Mercado
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. McKenzie Smith
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

Fifth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Burundi (S/2005/728)

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05-62202 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

Fifth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Burundi (S/2005/728)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Burundi, in which she requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to Her Excellency Mrs. Antoinette Batumubwira, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burundi.

At the invitation of the President, Mrs. Batumubwira (Burundi) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the fifth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Burundi, document S/2005/728. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2005/741, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of members to document S/2005/736, containing the text of a letter dated 23 November 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Burundi addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now invite Her Excellency Mrs. Batumubwira, Foreign Minister of Burundi, to make a statement.

Mrs. Batumubwira (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour and a true pleasure for me to have the opportunity to address the Security Council soon after the Council mission's fruitful visit to Burundi on 8 and 9 November 2005.

First, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Burundi, on behalf of my delegation and on my own account, I wish to extend my most sincere thanks to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for the commitment and courage he has always demonstrated as he carries out his noble task. I would also like to thank him for his commitment to the cause of peace and security throughout the world, and more specifically, in my country, Burundi. I would moreover like to thank the Security Council for the resolute determination it has demonstrated in its support for the people of Burundi in their quest for peace. With the adoption of resolution 1545 (2004) authorizing the deployment of ONUB, the United Nations made its contribution to the process of peace and national reconciliation in Burundi.

As of 1 June 2004, on the basis of the mandate explicitly set forth in paragraphs 5 to 7 of that resolution, the ONUB peacekeeping operation was deployed. From that point on, up until the elections in Burundi, ONUB provided resolute support to the electoral and democratic process.

Once again, I would take this opportunity to convey the gratitude of the Government of Burundi to Ms. Carolyn McAskie, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi, for her commitment to ensuring the success of ONUB's mission.

Almost exactly three months ago, following 10 years of political crisis, Burundi welcomed a democratically elected President. That was the last phase of a lengthy process that led, through negotiations, transitions and, finally, elections, to the establishment of elected political institutions at all levels — institutions whose major challenge is now to ensure the country's reconstruction, with a view to achieving sustainable development.

Developments in Burundi over the past two years have often been cited as exemplary. This outcome is the result of joint efforts by the international community, the African Union, the Regional Initiative and, above all, the people of Burundi themselves, who have demonstrated great political maturity in choosing peace and democracy.

Strengthened by its achievements, Burundi, through its Government, is working to address the challenges of reconstruction and development, which is the only way of ensuring sustainable peace.

Allow me to describe various aspects of the current situation in Burundi.

With respect to security, there is peace throughout most of the territory, apart from a few pockets in the areas of rural Bujumbura, Cibitoke and Bubanza, where the crime rate remains high. Sometimes banditry is the problem, and sometimes atrocities are perpetrated, such as the mutilations and decapitations carried out by members of the Front National de Libération (FNL). As Council members are aware, the FNL has refused to engage in talks to join all of the other people of Burundi on the path to reconstruction and development.

All of the security forces — the national police and the National Defence Force — are working hard to put an end to such actions, which could destabilize our hard-won peace. Fortunately, there are visible and encouraging results. In November, 707 members of the FNL-Palipehutu left the movement and surrendered to the authorities. Many of them have rejoined their families.

Throughout the national territory, the security situation is now under control. However, there is still some concern as to the presence of numerous armed groups, including the FNL-Palipehutu, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We would draw the Council's attention to this situation, which directly threatens our efforts to consolidate peace in Burundi. In that respect, we would recall the relevance of the letter dated 21 October 2005 addressed to the Security Council from the Tripartite Plus Commission calling for an extension of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

On the economic front, the country is emerging from a lengthy crisis, during which its economy was stagnant. Domestically, however, a certain sense of confidence has re-emerged, and, in the last few months, there has been a significant increase in the tax yield, the result of greater strictness in the collection of customs duties and taxes.

Burundi is one of the countries that benefited from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative; it reached the decision point last July. All efforts are being made to enable it to reach the completion point within one year. Debt cancellation would enable us to devote all of our financial resources to development. However, the country has an urgent need over the coming year for budgetary support so that we can overcome obstacles and reach the completion point by the end of the year.

As concerns reconstruction and development programmes, a document entitled "Priority programme for reconstruction and development, 2005-2008" is now being finalized. It is based on an earlier emergency programme and includes priority needs set out by the Government in the context of the combat against poverty. In the latter half of February 2006, the programme will be presented to a donor conference in Bujumbura.

However, I must stress the urgent need to financially strengthen multilateral agencies, including United Nations agencies, so that they can shift from humanitarian support to development support. In that respect, we welcome the establishment of Peacebuilding Commission, and we are certain that Burundi will benefit from the opportunities it makes available to countries in a post-conflict situation.

There have been very encouraging signs in terms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. In November, we were visited by a United Kingdom delegation led by the Secretary of State for International Development; a mission from Belgium, led by the Minister for Development Cooperation and the Minister of Defence; a mission from the World Bank headed by the Vice-President for Africa; and, finally, two high-level expert missions from France and from Germany recently visited Burundi.

It is important to stress that such cooperation, now and in future, will be taking place within in a new operational framework headed by a national committee on the coordination of assistance.

In addition, the foundations for a system for the effective management of assistance and of public finances have been laid in the context of the Ministry on Good Governance and General Inspection of the State and Local Administration. In a first major undertaking, an anti-corruption bill has been adopted by the Council of Ministers and will be voted on by the Parliament before the end of 2006.

It is in that context that ONUB's new mandate in Burundi was analysed. There is no doubt that it is because of the remarkable work done by ONUB that all of the progress I have been describing has been possible. A joint analysis by the Government and ONUB led to a decision to recommend a gradual disengagement, in an orderly manner, beginning on 1 January 2006. Several areas of cooperation with ONUB have been identified as still being necessary.

On the basis of discussions between the two parties, and in the framework of what has been agreed, the Government would like the next mandate of ONUB to focus on the following aspects: First, monitoring the borders between Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including Lake Tanganyika, and the cross-border movement of arms, in close cooperation with the Burundi security forces and ONUB; secondly, support for the completion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and for the reform of the security sector that is under way, in a spirit of collaboration with all of the relevant partners.

Thirdly, support is required for the promotion of human rights by strengthening existing capacity in civil society and in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi. In that connection, the Government welcomes the proposal agreed with ONUB to gradually replace international experts with national experts in the context of capacity-building.

Fourthly, support is required for transitional justice, with a view to establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Special Chamber. Fifthly, there must be protection of ONUB personnel and equipment, with support from the Government.

Sixthly, demining is required, with emphasis on capacity-building in that area; and, lastly, there is a need for logistical and engineering support for humanitarian operations carried out by the World Food Programme and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The people of Burundi, who voted overwhelmingly for peace, now await its dividends. The Government has the responsibility to do everything in its power to that legitimate aspiration. It is for that reason that we consider 2006 to be the year to mobilize all efforts — both at the national level and by our bilateral and multilateral partners — to rebuild Burundi and to resolutely dedicate ourselves to sustainable development. We count on the overall support of the United Nations in that undertaking, and of the Security Council in particular.

On behalf of the Government of Burundi, I wish to thank the Security Council in advance for the draft resolution it is about to adopt, for, like previous resolutions, it aims at supporting the determination of the people of Burundi to strengthen peace.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, Argentina, Benin, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Greece, Japan, Philippines, Romania, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1641 (2005).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.